THE PEACE CONFERENCE NOT A DEAD LETTER.

Its Relation to the Transvaal War.

BY THE REVEREND EDWARD EVERETT HALE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

The common remark which you hear in casual conversation is that the Peace Conference at The Hague amounted to nothing. It is so generally regarded as what is elegantly called a "back number" that but few of the journals of this country have noticed the fact that the convention, as its final act is called, was confirmed by the Senate of the United States on February 5.

The Emperor of Russia called The Hague conference together with the hope that it might make a formal statement of those central "principles of equity and right on which rest the security of states and the welfare of their peoples." Up to last May no serious effort had ever been made in the world to secure such a settlement. He proposed it and invited the civilized nations of the world to attempt it. They attempted it and succeeded in making a unanimous statement. That statement has now been confirmed by the twenty-six nations interested. The last of these nations is ours—a pure democracy, the largest republic in the world. This pure democracy, by what is virtually a unanimous vote, now gives its confirmation to the great plan of union suggested by the absolute sovereign of the world's largest empire. Thus the Old World and the New World join hands. The absolute ruler of the largest empire of the East, and "we, the people," of the largest republic unite in the statement of the "principles on which rest the security of states and the welfare of their peoples."

It is quite true that the convention has not prevented the Boer war, which was begun four months before it was confirmed. Yet we meet with many people who condemn it as useless because it did not settle that controversy between the Dutch and the English. Nor did it settle our own contest with the natives of the Philippines. It is a proposal looking toward peace among twenty-six nations who agree to it; and the feather weights ridicule it because it does not settle the affairs of the islanders in the Pacific or the Boers in the Transvaal, who had nothing to do with the treaty and for whom it did not pretend to make any provision. So Mr. Molineux might complain that the English courts of chancery do not proclaim him innocent and release him from custody.

One may say in passing, however, that the Boer war probably had something to do with our unanimous confirmation of the great convention. No matter which side may engage people's sympathies, every American is sorry that the Boer war is raging; every Senator is sorry for it. Before a Senate of such men at such a time came the great convention. It looked the right way. It expressed the wish for peace. It stated the "principles on which rest the security of states and the welfare of their peoples." Now, a man might think that it was too long or too complicated or too diplomatic, or not diplomatic enough. He might think it vague or impractical, or that it went into too much detail or attempted too much. But at such a moment, no man chose to oppose. Criticism on detail gave way before the determination to proclaim, in the most signal and definite announcement, that the United States of America wishes for the union of the world; second, and last, the policy of this nation is peace. The Senate of the United States has asserted this magnificently in the silent act by which it confirms the great convention without even the appearance of discussion. It is well to proclaim with such emphasis the sentiment of everybody worth considering that peace is our permanent policy.

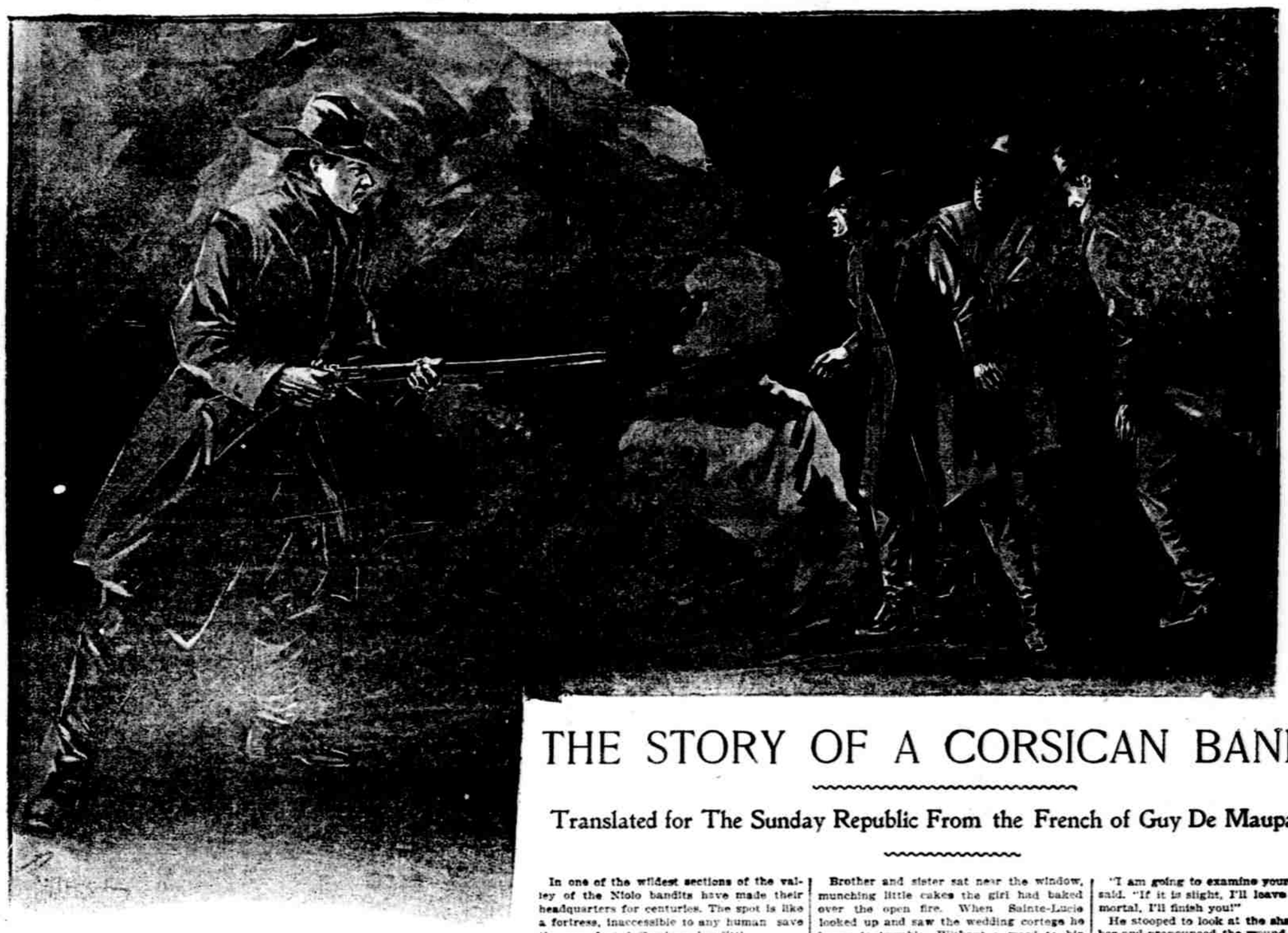
The nation had indeed already asserted this in a hundred thousand ways. There is something interesting, even pathetic, in the ingenuity, with which it asserted it. Before the Czar's rescript, when the delegates were chosen to the convention which nominated McKinley, the Republicans of Rhode Island embodied in their platform the declaration that the world wanted arbitration instead of war. The bar of the State of New York, a well organized body of business men not used to talk vaguely, appointed in the same year a very strong committee to draw plans for a permanent tribunal between the nations. Suggestions from this plan may be found in the great convention now ratified.

America likes to have her own way, and the conscientious people of America were quite sure that in this affair they were in the right. They might think the plans of the convention too elaborate. Peace is the policy of the people of the United States. No men know this better than the Senators of the United States. The Committee on Foreign Relations, a committee of great strength, never doubted or wavered. The leaders of the Senate said from the beginning that the convention would be confirmed without opposition. It is to the honor of the Senate that its leaders in this matter were right. There is something finely majestic in the simplicity with which the Senate set forward this great step in Christian civilization.

History of Spion Kop.

From Collier's Weekly.

Somebody inquired of Doctor Leyds, agent of the Transvaal in Europe, it is stated, what would be done with the 10,000 British soldiers if Ladysmith should fall into Boer hands. To which he responded: "We should either build for them a big prison or put them to work in the mines. That was what the old Romans did." It must be granted that these are not words which would echo very musically here, even if the brave blood on Spion Kop were not still scarcely dry. Apropos of this mountain—one whose name is fated to send thrills of horror through thousands of hearts for many an unborn year—it was thus called because the Boer Foertrekkers, when they fled from English authority, stopped at this elevation before they crossed the Drakensberg, in order to decide whither should be their next move. Ladysmith lies between fourteen or fifteen miles distant, and there, as we know, the trekking soon came to an end. Spion Kop means "the hill of spying," for "kop" is used to indicate a superior kind of kopje. With this hill a singular legend is connected. Years ago the funeral of a famed Zulu chief occurred there—whether upon its summit or one of its spurs I am unable to say. During the obsequies a python of great size made its appearance. One of the young warriors dashed toward it, and with a valiant blow cut off its tail. But a revered soothsayer declared that this monster serpent was an ancestor of the great chief whom they were now burying, so the python was permitted to escape. Ever since then, however, the grotesque and stumptailed ancient mariner returns; and at such times, the Boers assert for, at least, some of them do), that an event of mighty import is on the verge of occurrence. Whether or no it has been observed before those two desolating conflicts which have just happened, even the yellowest of yellow journalism (and London journalism can be very yellow when it tries) has not yet informed us.



Facing His Father's Slayer, He Cried: "Your Time Has Come."

THE STORY OF A CORSICAN BANDIT.

Translated for The Sunday Republic From the French of Guy De Maupassant.

In one of the wildest sections of the valley of the Niolo bandits have made their headquarters for centuries. The spot is like a fortress, inaccessible to any human save the sure-footed Corsican banditti.

Neither tree nor grass grows in these weird mountains, which form a desert of granite as far as the eye can reach.

The most notorious of these bandits was the terrible Sainte-Lucie. His father had been killed in a quarrel by a youth of the village, leaving behind two children—Sainte-Lucie and his sister. The boy was a weakling, timid, small of stature and frequently ill from one cause or another. He never displayed the slightest energy, and could not be persuaded to declare the vendetta against his father's assassin. All his relations came to plead with him to avenge himself. He was as deaf to their entreaties as to their threats.

In accordance with an old Corsican custom, his sister, indignant at his indifference, made him divest himself of his mourning habit. There should be no display of sorrow where the victim's death remained unavenged.

Sainte-Lucie was indifferent to even this outrage. Rather than shoulder the gun his father's hand had loaded, he locked himself up in his house, refusing to encounter the angry looks of the young men of the village.

Months passed by. Sainte-Lucie seemed to have forgotten the crime, and continued to dwell peacefully with his sister in their humble hut. One day the news spread about the place that the murderer of their father was about to take unto himself a wife. The rumor apparently made no impression on the son. The assassin, in a spirit of bravado, passed the house of the two orphans on his way to the church.

Brother and sister sat near the window, munching little cakes the girl had baked over the open fire. When Sainte-Lucie looked up and saw the wedding cortege he began to tremble. Without a word to his sister, he arose, crossed himself, and, armed with his father's gun, left the house.

Months afterwards, when he was asked to explain his peculiar action, he insisted that he could not account for the change that had come over him.

"All at once I felt my blood boiling," he said. "I knew I could not resist the strange impulse and concealed the gun in a cave on the road to Corte."

An hour later he came back empty-handed. His face wore the same sad expression. To his sister he seemed as indifferent as ever.

At nightfall he disappeared. At the same time his enemy, accompanied by two attendants, started afoot for Corte. The lads went along their way singing, unmindful of danger. Suddenly Sainte-Lucie blocked their progress. Facing his father's slayer, he cried:

"Your time has come!"

A single bullet plowed its way through the young man's breast, causing instant death. One of his companions fled, the other turned upon the assailant:

"What have you done, Sainte-Lucie?" he asked over and over again, then started to run toward Corte for assistance.

Sainte-Lucie stopped him.

"Another step and I'll break your leg!" he threatened. The young man, who had always known him to be a timid fellow, replied:

"You'll not dare to do it!"

A moment later he fell to the ground with a shattered knee, Sainte-Lucie drew near his victim.

"I am going to examine your wound," he said. "If it is slight, I'll leave you here. If mortal, I'll finish you!"

He stooped to look at the shattered member and pronounced the wound fatal. Slowly reloading his gun, he urged his victim to say his last prayer before he shot him through the head.

The following morning Sainte-Lucie had joined the bandits in the mountains.

Every member of the murderer's family was arrested. His uncle, a poor priest, whom the authorities suspected of having urged his nephew to commit the deed, was placed in prison under the charge of murder. He escaped, armed himself with a gun, and fled to the mountains to join his nephew.

Sainte-Lucie, the timid, killed the accusers of his uncle, one after the other. Not satisfied with taking their lives, he tore out their eyes to teach others not to pretend to know what they had not seen.

Every relative, every friend of his enemy's family fell a victim to his terrible vengeance. Having tasted blood, he now seemed insatiable. He killed fourteen officers who were sent out to arrest him, set fire to the houses of his adversaries and remained to the end of his days the most fearless and terrible bandit the Valley of the Niolo had ever known.

To this day children and their elders speak with awe of Sainte-Lucie, the bandit with the holy name.

"What an awful custom!" exclaims the traveler who listens to the story of Sainte-Lucie and his vengeance, while he drinks his wine at the tavern table.

"He did his duty!" answers a villager, to whom the vendetta of the Corsican is as sacred as the Holy Bible.

A Characteristic Stuart Robson Pose in "Oliver Goldsmith."

STORIES OF PLAYERFOLK.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

An Englishman, reared in the Queen's country and living for a considerable time in the large cities of Canada, criticised severely the little toque bonnet Mrs. Kendal wore in the first act of "The Elder Miss Blossom."

"The gown's all right," said this authority, "but the headgear is strictly English and therefore unbecoming. I never knew an Englishwoman who didn't disfigure herself with a hat."

Now Mrs. Kendal does wear pretty gowns in her plays, but her town frocks are as British as her daughters,' who were with her this last week, and who did wear the strangest clothes that ever came out of London. Of course, they dress sensibly, but there is a wide margin between sense and taste. The Kendal girls were conspicuous in their ruffled waists and slimpsy skirts, while they themselves gazed open-mouthed at the dashing clothes worn by many ladies at the Southern Hotel, where the Kendals stopped.

By the way, Mrs. Kendal has nerves, though she is so wholesome-looking that one would not suspect it. When her nerves assert themselves she takes to tatting or to poetry. It depends upon what agitates Mrs. Kendal whether she knits or reads, and occasionally, when the nerves are so unruly that shuttle or book won't put a quietus on them, Mrs. Kendal takes a bicycle ride. While in St. Louis the English actress was compelled to rely altogether on her tatting, or Browning or Keats, her favorite authors, for the weather made the outdoor exercise impossible.

Apropos of the first production of Stuart Robson's new comedy, "Oliver Goldsmith," which occurred in Rochester on Thanksgiving Day, there is a funny story going the rounds of the Players' Club in New York City.

It seems that Augustus Thomas, the author of Mr. Robson's play, had gone to Rochester to superintend the final details in launching his latest work, and, together with the Governor (as Mr. Robson is familiarly called), Henry E. Dixey, Walter Hale, Chief Henry A. Weaver and several other prominent members of the company, they registered at Powers's Hotel. The papers gave the piece a good send-off, which did not meet the approval of the chief clerk of the hotel, who was in the audience. Disappointed and vexed at not finding his views expressed in the morning locals, he buttonholed every guest that came to the desk in an endeavor to get them to side with him as to the play's dramatic worth. When Mr. Thomas appeared in the lobby he beckoned excitedly to him, and to appreciate what follows it must be remembered that the dramatist is a clean-shaven gentleman who looks not unlike an actor. As he had come after Mr. Robson's company arrived, the clerk did not suspect that he had any connection with the show.

"Look here, will you!" exclaimed the clerk in disgust. "Here's a man who says that play of 'Goldsmith' in the greatest play that ever came to Rochester; that it is a classic, and a lot of other stuff. Did you ever read such rot? Now, I go to the theater regularly and pride myself on knowing something about plays, but if it had not been for you fellows who acted in it I am sure the critics wouldn't have been able to say anything good for it."

Mr. Thomas had listened quietly to all this, and when the clerk had finished he walked out of the hotel to find some one to tell the story to.

During the day some one told the clerk how he had blundered, and when, late in the evening, Mr. Thomas returned, the humblest fellow behind the desk was the aforesaid clerk. He apologized a dozen times, and finally excused himself on the plea that he hadn't read the book from which the play was dramatized.

"I haven't, either," gasped Thomas, staggered by this last blow, "but suppose you send me a copy of it."

Another good story comes from the English stage anent an unrehearsed incident which called for extra cleverness on the part of the performer, who wished to avoid appearing ridiculous. The performance was that of "The Shop Girl," which had a tremendous run some four years ago. There is a French Count in the cast, who, at a rally of wit from Appleby anent his feet, retorts sarcastically:

"I reserve my foot for you, sare!"

So saying, he raises the foot as if he intended to kick the unfortunate Appleby. On this occasion the boot accidentally flew off into the wings, displaying a large hole in his sock. The ready-witted comedian who played the part was, however, equal to the occasion.

"Farewell, sare!" he exclaimed, tragically, limping round the stage. "Farewell! We shall meet again! I go t—to mend my socks!" The house literally roared with laughter, and the scene was saved.

Third act of the new New England comedy, THE VILLAGE POSTMASTER.